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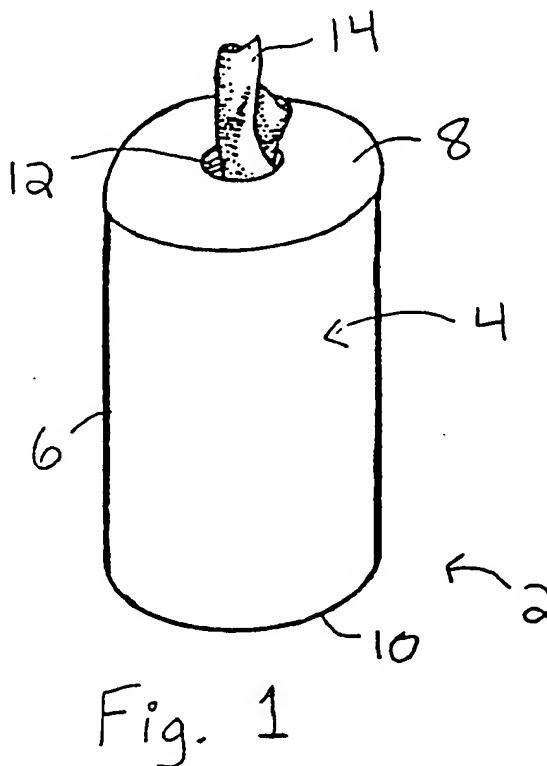
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(54) Dispensing container fitting into a vehicle cup holder

(57) A dispensing container (2) for storing and dispensing articles (14) in a vehicle having a cylindrical container body, wherein the container body (4) is receivable within a beverage holder in a vehicle. The container body (4) will preferably have a diameter in the range of 2.6 to 2.8 inches to fit securely into a conventional vehicle cup holder. The container body includes at least one side wall (6), a bottom surface (10), and a top surface (8). The articles may be dispensed from an aperture (12) provided in the top surface of the container body, or, alternatively, from a tear-away section formed along a scored portion of the top surface (8) and a scored portion of the side wall (6) which is torn open to allow access to the articles within said container body. The container body may further include a reinforcing support positioned adjacent to a side wall for providing additional lateral support for the container body. Additionally, the dispensing container may include a stabilizing device positioned adjacent to the bottom surface for providing additional balance to retain the container body in an upright position within the vehicle beverage holder. The top surface (8) of the dispensing container may also include a removable lid to allow access to the articles within the container and to allow the container to be refilled.



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Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a tissue dispensing container for use in vehicles. More particularly, the present invention pertains to a dispensing container formed of such size and shape so as to fit within a vehicle cup holder.

BACKGROUND ART

The use of a disposable paper sheet material, such as facial tissues, napkins, paper towels, etc., is often needed when operating motor vehicles for either cleaning or for personal use. Consumers will often keep loose tissues or napkins in their vehicles for those instances when they may be needed. However, maintaining a large quantity of loose tissues within a vehicle is not only inconvenient for a consumer and provides for a sloppy and unorganized vehicle. Further, the tissues are not stored in a clean, sanitary environment. Therefore, some consumers use small, low-count packages of tissues in their vehicles, otherwise known as "travel packs" or "pocket packs." These smaller packages usually contain smaller-sized tissues, and consumers often need to use large quantities of these tissues due to their smaller size. However, the small packages are usually low-count packages, so these "travel packs" need to be replaced frequently. Accordingly, these smaller packages of tissues are often unacceptable to the needs of most consumers.

Meanwhile, the majority of the larger facial tissues packages do not fit into convenient locations within the driver's reach. Consequently, larger tissues packages are usually placed on the front or back seat, the vehicle floor, the glove compartment or console compartments which may be hard to reach. Placement in these locations often results in the packages becoming damaged by tossing about within the vehicle, since these packages are usually not securely positioned within the vehicle. The package may also be inadvertently crushed when sat upon or if another object is placed on top of it, which may result in damage to the dispensing feature of the package. Furthermore, the fact that the tissue package is not held securely in place and is difficult to find can be hazardous if the driver becomes distracted in searching for the tissue package and is unable to use both hands for driving. Accordingly, there is a need for a tissue dispensing package which may conveniently be positioned in close proximity to the driver where the driver will know where to locate the tissue package.

One such facial tissue package is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,516,000 issued to Freiburger et al., which discloses a tissue carton especially adapted for use in automobiles. This tissue carton has a wide width and

thin depth design which allows the carton to be placed in narrow compartments convenient to the driver's use, such as map pockets, dash pockets and console compartments. However, the majority of the vehicles being manufactured today possess extremely different features in storage compartments between the various makes and models of vehicles. Where one type of vehicle may contain a map pocket, another type of vehicle may only contain a glove compartment. Therefore, depending upon the type of vehicle owned by a consumer, that vehicle will possess storage compartments which differ from those of other vehicles. Accordingly, some vehicles may not possess narrow compartments in close proximity to the driver where the driver could store the tissue carton of Freiburger et al. Even in vehicles which do possess narrow storage compartments, the size and location of these storage compartments will vary with the type of vehicle owned by the consumer, so that there is not a storage area which is uniform in size and location from vehicle to vehicle. Accordingly, in order to increase the convenience of the storage location to the driver and to minimize distractions to the driver, there is a need for a tissue package which conforms to a storage area which exists in virtually every vehicle, wherein the storage area is uniform in size from vehicle to vehicle. Additionally, map pockets and similar compartments may be conveniently positioned for use by the driver, but these compartments are often not accessible to other occupants within the vehicle. If another occupant needs a tissue, the driver must be distracted to obtain the tissue for the other occupant. Therefore, there is a need for a tissue dispensing package which is stored in a location conveniently accessible to all occupants of a vehicle.

Most vehicles contain as a standard feature a receptacle for holding beverage containers, such as cups and cans, so that the beverage will not spill when the vehicle is moving. Cup holders may also be purchased as an aftermarket accessory for use in the vehicle. The location of the cup holder in the vehicle is such that the driver and other occupants of the vehicle may conveniently place the beverage container in the cup holder when they are not drinking from it. Therefore, the cup holder is a storage location which is uniformly positioned in a convenient location to the driver and other occupants in almost every vehicle. Furthermore, such cup holders are generally circularly sized to snugly receive a conventional 12 ounce beverage can approximately 2-5/8 inches in diameter, so that the size of the cup holders are substantially uniform in size from vehicle to vehicle. Accordingly, there is a need for a tissue dispensing package which is fittingly received within a vehicle cup holder, so as to provide a tissue dispensing package conveniently positioned in a storage area easily accessible to the driver, wherein such tissue dispensing package may be securely kept in a storage area uniform in size from vehicle to vehicle.

The tissue package of Freiburger et al. has a width

of 5 inches to accommodate full-sized facial tissue sheets, and, accordingly, would not be receivable within a standard vehicle cup holder approximately 2-5/8 inches in diameter. Other tissue packages having a smaller size and shape than conventional tissue boxes have used in the past. Canadian Patent No. 974,203 issued to Nelson discloses a cylindrical tissue dispensing package which requires less surface area for storage than conventional tissues packages. However, Nelson's cylindrical tissue dispensing package is only reduced to 19 square inches, resulting in diameter of the package of approximately 4.92 inches. Therefore, the tissue dispensing package of Nelson would also not be receivable within a standard vehicle cup holder approximately 2-5/8 inches in diameter.

Therefore, as can be seen from the foregoing, there is clearly a need for a tissue dispensing package which is fittingly receivable within a vehicle cup holder, so as to provide a tissue dispensing package conveniently accessible to occupants of almost every vehicle.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is a primary object of the present invention to overcome the aforementioned shortcomings associated with the prior art.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a dispensing container which is conveniently stored in all vehicles in a location accessible to the occupants of a vehicle.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a dispensing container which can be stored more securely, conveniently and safely with a vehicle.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a dispensing container which is receivable within a vehicle cup holder.

Yet a further object of the present invention is to provide a disposable dispensing container which is receivable within a vehicle cup holder.

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide a reusable and refillable dispensing container for use in a vehicle.

Still another object of the present invention is to provide a dispensing container which engages with the vehicle cup holder to retain the dispensing container in place during use, which allows for easier one hand dispensing of a product.

It is still another object of the present invention to provide a dispensing container having fluted side walls to increase the sturdiness of the container.

These as well as other objects and advantages of the present invention are achieved by producing a dispensing container for storing and dispensing articles in a vehicle having a cylindrical container body, wherein the container body is receivable within a beverage holder in a vehicle. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the container body will have a diameter of 2.6 to 2.8 inches to fit securely into the vehicle cup

holder. The container body includes at least one side wall, a bottom surface, and a top surface. The articles may be dispensed from an aperture provided in the top surface of the container body, or, alternatively, from a tear-away section formed along a scored portion of the top surface and a scored portion of the side wall which is torn open to allow access to the articles within said container body. The container body may further include a reinforcing support positioned adjacent to a side wall for providing additional lateral support for the container body. Additionally, the dispensing container may include a stabilizing device positioned adjacent to the bottom surface for providing additional balance to retain the container body in an upright position within the vehicle beverage holder. The top surface of the dispensing container may also include a removable lid which may be removed to allow tissues to be retrieved from within the container body or to allow the container to be refilled.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of the dispensing container in accordance with a first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of the dispensing container having a removable lid in accordance with the first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 3 is a perspective view of the dispensing container in accordance with a second embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 4 is a perspective view of the closed dispensing container in accordance with a third embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 5 is a perspective view of the opened dispensing container in accordance with the third embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 6 is a perspective view of the dispensing container in accordance with an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 7 is a perspective view of the dispensing container in accordance with yet another alternative embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring now to Fig. 1, the dispensing container 2 in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention is illustrated. The dispensing container 2 includes a container body 4 having at least one side wall 6, a top surface 8, and a bottom surface 10. The container body 4 is cylindrical in shape so that it fits into a standard round vehicle cup holder. In the preferred embodiments of the present invention shown in Figs. 1-7, the dispensing container 2 will be described as having a cylindrical shape; however, it is understood that the dispensing container 2 may comprise any shape which allows the dispensing container 2 to fit securely

within a standard size vehicle cup holder. For instance, the dispensing container 2 may be formed in a polygonal or truncated cone shape. At least a bottom portion of the side wall 6 and the bottom surface 10 should be small enough in diameter so as to fit within a vehicle cup holder. The container body 4 of the dispensing container 2 shown in Fig. 1 has a substantially uniform diameter in order to accommodate a roll of tissues placed therein. In order to fit securely within a standard vehicle cup holder, the diameter of the container body 4 should be in the range of 2.6 to 2.8 inches. However, for vehicle cup holders of non-standard sizes, the dispensing container 2 may also be manufactured in various sizes to accommodate the different sized cup holders. The diameter of the dispensing container 2 should be close enough to the diameter of the vehicle cup holder to prevent the dispensing container 2 from becoming dislodged when dispensing articles.

The remaining description of the dispensing container 2 of the present invention with reference to the several figures will be directed to a tissue dispenser; however, it is understood that the dispensing container 2 of the present invention may be utilized for dispensing other products as well that can be stored within a vehicle cup holder. The top surface 8 of the dispensing container 2 includes an aperture 12 from which the tissues 14 are grasped and dispensed to the consumer. The tissues 14 stored within the container body 4 may be in either roll form or interfolded sheets. When in roll form, the original roll of tissues has a diameter just slightly smaller than the diameter of the container body 4. Therefore, the roll of tissues itself provides lateral support of the side wall 6 when pressure is exerted on the side wall 6 of the container body 4, such as when the dispensing container 2 is grasped by a consumer. The roll of tissues is dispensed by grasping a portion of the tissues extending through aperture 12, pulling the desired amount of tissue from the dispensing container 2, and tearing the roll of tissues at that point. The roll of tissues unwinds as the tissues 14 are dispensed, wherein the roll may either unwind from the outside or the inside of the roll.

The desired portion of tissues 14 may simply be torn off by the consumer by dispensing from a roll of tissues, wherein the roll of tissues may be perforated to assist in tearing. Alternatively, the top surface 8 of the dispensing container 2 may also include a severing device to facilitate the tearing of the desired portion of tissues, when dispensing from a roll of tissues. The severing device may include a sharp or serrated edge about the periphery of aperture 12 or other similar severing devices.

The tissue dispensing container 2 is preferably manufactured from either paper or plastic to provide an economical dispenser which may be produced in a disposable form. In one embodiment of the present invention, the dispensing container 2 is sealed in a manufacturing step after the tissues 14 are placed

within the container 2, so that the dispensing container 2 is disposable after all of the tissues 14 within the container 2 are exhausted. Alternatively, the dispensing container 2 may be reusable, wherein a refill of tissues 14 may be inserted within dispensing container 2 after the previous supply is exhausted. One such refillable embodiment is illustrated in Fig. 2, where the top surface 8 is included in a removable lid 16 which extends over the side wall 6 of container body 4. The lid 16 frictionally engages with or is similarly fastened to the container body 4 such that the lid 16 does not become dislodged from the container body 4 when the tissues 14 are pulled through aperture 12 as they are dispensed. The lid 16 may also be used in disposable dispensing containers 2, where the lid may be removed to allow the tissues 14 to be retrieved from the container body 4.

When the dispensing container 2 is manufactured from paper, a rectangular sheet of paper is rolled into a cylinder to form the side walls 6 of the container body 4 with the ends of the rectangular paper sheet attached together to retain this cylindrical shape. Then two discs of paper are cut from a sheet of paper and used to form the top and bottom surfaces 8 and 10, wherein an aperture 12 is cut in disc of paper forming the top surface 8. Alternatively, the score lines defining aperture 12 may be formed in the top surface 8, and the portion of the top surface 8 between the score lines may be removed by the consumer to produce the aperture 12. The edges of the discs of paper are folded downward so that the discs possess the same diameter as the rolled cylinder. Additionally, several folded creases are formed about the periphery of the downwardly turned edges of the discs to increase the rigidity and lateral support of the edges. After the tissues 14 are inserted into the rolled cylinder, the dispensing container 2 is completed by gluing or otherwise attaching the outside of the downwardly turned edges of the paper discs to the inner surface on both ends of the rolled cylinder and an aperture 12 is cut the discs of paper. Therefore, the edges of the container body 4 will added lateral support from the folded creases in the top and bottom surfaces 8 and 10.

Referring now to Fig. 3, an alternative embodiment of the present invention is illustrated having a fluted side wall 18. All other similarly numbered components function equivalently as discussed above unless specifically described otherwise. When the dispensing container 2 is formed from paper, the material used to form side wall 18 is fluted or rippled. When the dispensing container 2 is formed from plastic, the flutes or ripples are formed into the circumference of the cylinder, wherein the flutes may solely be formed near the bottom of the cylinder where the flutes would assist in retaining the dispensing container 2 securely in the vehicle cup holder. The flutes in side wall 18 provide additional support and sturdiness to the dispensing container 2. The fluted side wall 18 also assists in keeping the dispensing container 2 in place in the vehicle cup holder during use, since the

flutes provide greater frictional resistance between the dispensing container 2 and the vehicle cup holder. The fluted side wall 18 additionally provides an easier handling surface to grip for the consumer.

Referring now to Fig. 4, an alternative embodiment of the present invention is illustrated having a different dispensing opening than the aperture 12 formed in the top surface 8 of the container body 4 as discussed above. In this embodiment, a portion of the top surface 8 includes a line of weakness in the form of a perforate cut score line 20 and a portion of the side wall 6 adjacent to the top surface 8 includes a line of weakness in the form of a perforated score line 22, wherein the perforated cut score lines 20 and 22 define a tear-away section 24 of the container body 4. Therefore, the consumer can tear off tear-away section 24 along score lines 20 and 22 to allow access to the tissues 14 stored therein. Once tear-away section 24 is removed from the container body 4, an aperture 26 exists between a portion of the top surface 8 and an adjacent portion of the side wall 6 where the tissues 14 are dispensed from, as illustrated in Fig. 5. Similarly to the previously described embodiments, this embodiment may dispense tissues 14 in either roll form or interfolded sheets. Additionally, the aperture 26 may be formed solely in the side wall 6 rather than including a portion of the top surface 8.

In order to provide additional lateral support to the side wall 6 of the container body 4, the side wall 6 may include a strip of supporting material 30 affixed to the inner surface of the side wall 6, as illustrated by the dashed lines in Fig. 6. The supporting material 30 is positioned in a middle portion of the side wall 6 between the top surface 8 and bottom surface 10 where the lateral support of the side wall 6 is the weakest. Alternatively, several strips of supporting material 30 may be positioned along side wall 6 between top surface 8 and bottom surface 10 and spaced apart from one another, or the strip of supporting material 30 may be wide enough so that the entire inner surface of the side wall 6 is covered by the supporting material 30. This additional lateral support is especially useful when the dispensing container 2 is manufactured from paper. The strip of supporting material 30 may include any material which may be rolled into cylindrical form along with the sheet of paper material used to form cylindrical side wall 6. Therefore, the strip of supporting material 30 is preferably affixed to the rectangular sheet of paper material forming side wall 6 prior to rolling the sheet into a cylinder. However, the strip of supporting material 30 may alternatively surround the tissues 14 contained within the dispensing container 2 and abut the inner surface of the side wall 6, so that a new strip of supporting material 30 would be replaced along with the tissues 14 as they are refilled.

Referring now to Fig. 7, an alternative embodiment of the present invention is illustrated having a base support plate 32 for providing added stabilization to the dispensing container 2. The base support plate 32 is

affixed to the bottom surface 10 of container body 4, wherein the base support plate 32 may be attached to either side of the bottom surface 10. The base support plate 32 provides added weight to the bottom of the dispensing container 2 which assists in retaining the dispensing container 2 in an upright position at all times, and base support plate 32 further assists in keeping the dispensing container 2 within the vehicle cup holder while tissues are being dispensed. The base support plate 32 may be manufactured from paperboard, plastic, metal, or any material of substantial weight to provide additional balance to the dispensing container 2.

Referring now to Figure 8, an alternative embodiment dispensing container 40 of the present invention having a frustoconical shape is illustrated. In this embodiment, the diameter of the bottom surface 10 is smaller than the diameter of the top surface 8 so that the side wall 6 is tapered as it extends from the top surface 8 toward the bottom surface 10. At some point between the top surface 8 and the bottom surface 10, the diameter of the side wall 6 should fit securely within the vehicle cup holder, wherein the diameter of the bottom surface 10 will be smaller than the diameter of the vehicle cup holder. Accordingly, the dispensing container 40 is inserted into the vehicle cup holder until the side wall 6 engages the vehicle cup holder. Although most vehicle cup holders are formed having a standard diameter, the depth of the cup holder usually ranges from vehicle to vehicle. Therefore, the tapering of side wall 6 should be such that the side wall 6 will engage the sides of vehicle cup holder of various depths, while enough of the container body 4 extends into the vehicle cup holder to provide a stable dispensing container 40.

As can be seen from the foregoing, a dispensing container formed in accordance with the present invention allows consumer products to be stored and dispensed securely, conveniently and safely. Moreover, by forming a dispensing container in accordance with the present invention, the dispensing container may be stored in a vehicle cup holder providing a storage area uniform in size from vehicle to vehicle. Additionally, a dispensing container formed in accordance with the present invention provides a stable and easily accessible dispenser which allows for easy one hand dispensing of a product, thus being less distractive to the driver.

Claims

1. A dispenser for storing and dispensing articles in a vehicle, comprising:

a container body for holding articles therein, said container body including a dispensing means for dispensing the articles from said container, wherein said container body is of a dimension which is receivable within a beverage holder in a vehicle.

2. A dispensing container for storing and dispensing tissues, comprising:

a container body for holding tissues therein, said container body including a dispensing means for dispensing the tissues from said container, wherein said container body is of a dimension which is receivable within a beverage holder in a vehicle.
3. A dispenser for storing and dispensing articles in a vehicle, comprising:

a container body which fits snugly within a vehicle beverage holder during storage and dispensing of the articles to allow for one-handed dispensing of the articles.
4. The dispenser as defined in claim 1, wherein said container body contains facial tissues.
5. A dispenser or dispensing container as defined in one of the preceding claims, wherein said container body is cylindrical in shape.
6. The dispenser or dispensing container as defined in claim 5, wherein said cylindrical container body is of a diameter in the range of 2.6 to 2.8 inches.
7. A dispenser or dispensing container as defined in one of the claims 1 to 4, wherein said container body is polygonal.
8. A dispenser or dispensing container as defined in one of the preceding claims, wherein said container body is formed from a paper material.
9. A dispenser or dispensing container as defined in one of the claims 1 to 7, wherein said container body is formed from a plastic material.
10. A dispenser or dispensing container as defined in one of the preceding claims, wherein said container body includes at least one side wall, a bottom surface, and a top surface.
11. The dispenser or dispensing container as defined in claim 10, wherein said side wall is fluted.
12. The dispenser or dispensing container as defined in one of the preceding claims, wherein said top surface comprises a removable lid.
13. The dispenser or dispensing container as defined in one of the preceding claims, further including reinforcing means positioned adjacent to said side wall for providing additional lateral support for said container body.
14. The dispenser or dispensing container as defined in one of the preceding claims, further including stabilizing means positioned adjacent said bottom surface for providing additional balance to retain said container body in an upright position within said vehicle beverage holder.
15. A dispenser or dispensing container as defined in one of the preceding claims, wherein said container body is refillable with additional articles.
16. A dispenser or dispensing container as defined in one of the preceding claims, wherein said container body contains and dispenses a continuous roll of tissues.
17. A dispenser or dispensing container as defined in one of the preceding claims, wherein said container body contains and dispenses a plurality of interfolded tissues.
18. The dispenser or dispensing container as defined in one of the preceding claims, wherein said dispensing means comprises an aperture provided in said top surface of said container body.
19. A dispenser or dispensing container as defined in one of the preceding claims, wherein said dispensing means is defined by a line of weakness formed in said container body.
20. The dispenser or dispensing container as defined in claim 19, wherein a portion of said top surface and a portion of said side wall of the container include said line of weakness to provide a tear-away section in said container body which may be torn open to allow access to the articles within said container body.
21. The dispenser or dispensing container as defined in claims 19 or 20, wherein a portion of said side wall of the container includes said line of weakness to provide a tear-away section in said container body which may be torn open to allow access to the articles within said container body.
22. The dispenser or dispensing container as defined in claims 9 to 21, wherein said top surface comprises a removably secured lid; said dispensing means comprising said removably secured lid.
23. A dispenser or dispensing container as defined in one of the preceding claims, wherein said container body is frustoconical.
24. The dispensing container as defined in one of the preceding claims, wherein the dispensing container is refillable with additional tissues.

25. The dispensing container as defined in one of the preceding claims, wherein the dispensing container contains and dispenses a continuous roll of tissues.
26. The dispensing container as defined in claims 1 to 24, wherein the dispensing container contains and dispenses a plurality of interfolded tissues. 5
27. The dispensing container as defined in claim 20, wherein a portion of said top surface and a portion of said side wall of said container body include said line of weakness to provide a tear-away section in said container body which may be torn open to allow access to the tissues within said container body; said dispensing means comprising said tear-away section in said container body. 10 15
28. The dispensing container as defined in one of the preceding claims, wherein said dispensing means includes a severing device to facilitate the tearing off of a portion of a continuous roll of tissues. 20

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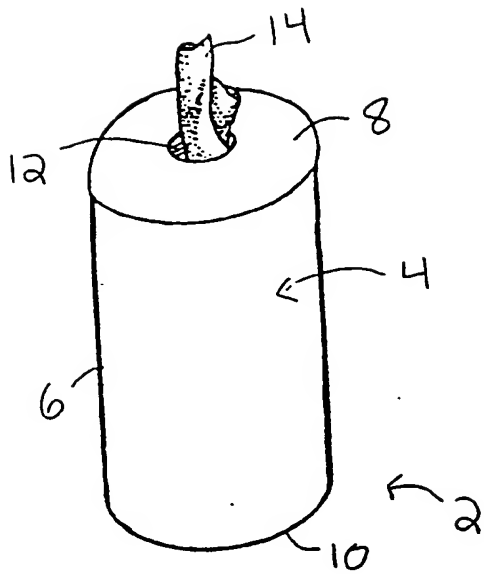


Fig. 1

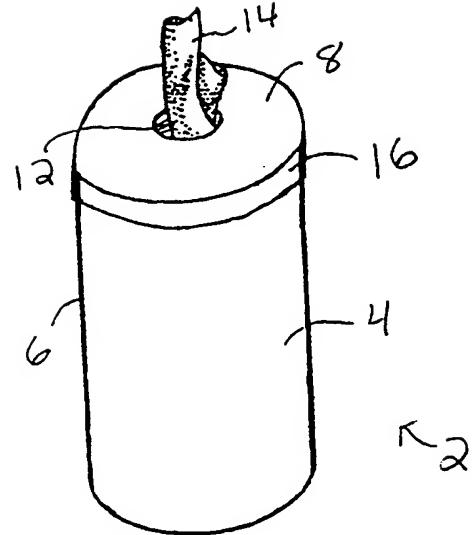


Fig. 2

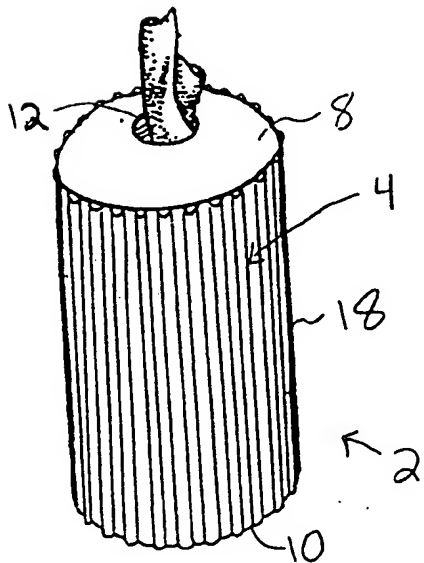


Fig. 3

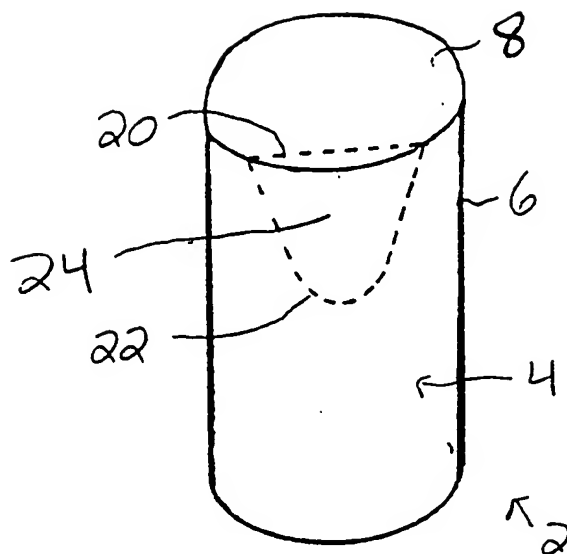


Fig. 4

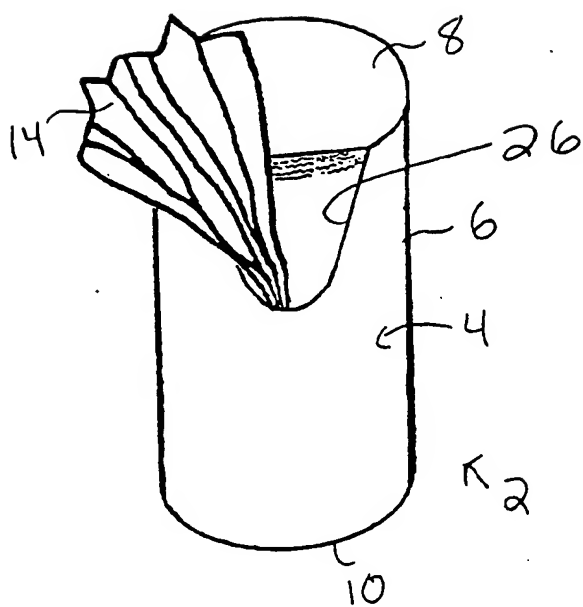


Fig. 5

Fig. 6

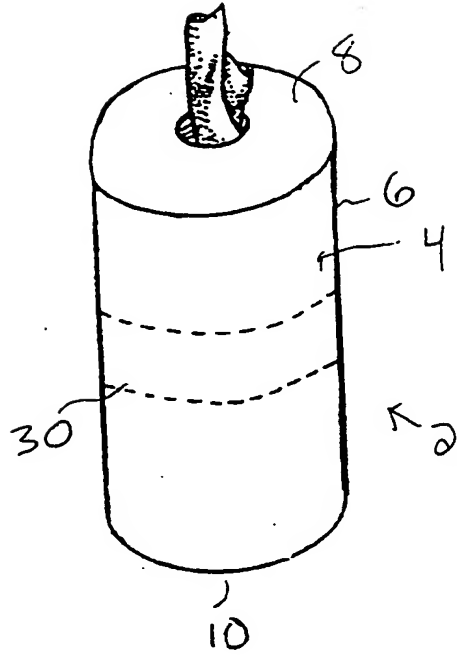


Fig. 7

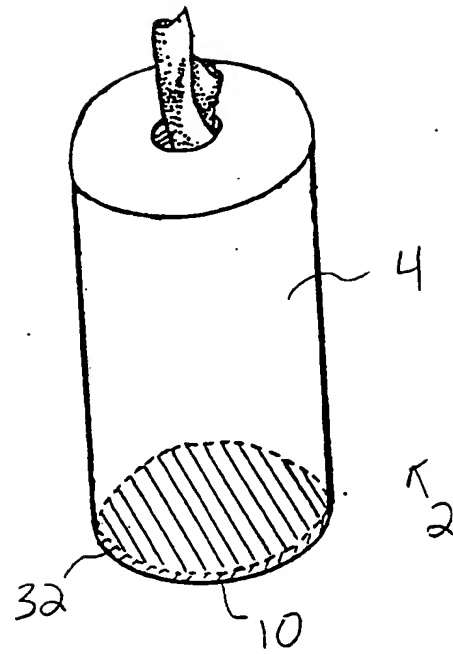
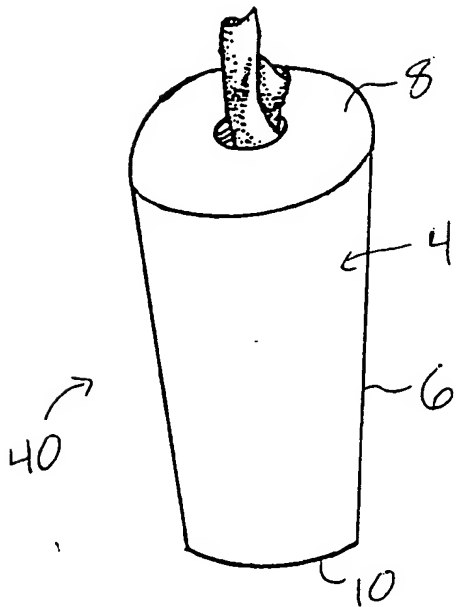


Fig. 8





European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 97 11 1864

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
X	EP 0 599 058 A (VP-SCHICKEDANZ AG)	1-6, 9, 10, 14-16, 18, 24, 25	B65D83/08 A47K10/38
Y	* the whole document *	7, 8, 11-13, 17, 19-23, 26-28	
Y	--- US 4 436 221 A (MARGULIES)	7, 8	
X	* the whole document *	1-4, 6	
Y	--- FR 1 300 440 A (R. KIENTZ)	11, 13	
Y	* the whole document *		
Y	--- US 4 462 507 A (MARGULIES)	12, 22, 28	
X	* the whole document *	1-6	
Y	--- FR 2 317 207 A (UNION CARBIDE CORP.)	17, 26	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
X	* the whole document *	1-5	
Y	--- EP 0 352 534 A (KAHNES & CO.)	19-21, 27	B65D A47K
Y	* the whole document *		
Y	--- EP 0 534 600 A (SCOTT PAPER CO.)	23	
Y	* figure 1 *		
X	--- EP 0 673 844 A (SCHMALBACH-LUBECA)	1	
X	* abstract *		

The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		27 October 1997	PERNICE, C
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons</p> <p>----- & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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